



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request; Ventilation Plans, Tests, and Examinations in Underground Coal Mines

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor (DOL) is submitting this Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)-sponsored information collection request (ICR) to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA). Public comments on the ICR are invited.

DATES: The OMB will consider all written comments that agency receives on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this notice to www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting "Currently under 30-day Review - Open for Public Comments" or by using the search function.

Comments are invited on: (1) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Department, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) if the information will be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) the accuracy of the agency's estimates of the burden and cost of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (4) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information collection; and (5) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nora Hernandez by telephone at 202-693-8633 or by email at DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under Section 101(a) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (the Mine Act), the Secretary may by rule in accordance with procedures set forth in this section and in accordance with section 553 of Title 5, United States Code (without regard to any reference in such section to sections 556 and 557 of such title), develop, promulgate, and revise as may be appropriate, improved mandatory health or safety standards for the protection of life and prevention of injuries in coal or other mines. In addition, Section 303 requires that all coal mines be ventilated by mechanical ventilation equipment installed and operated in a manner approved by an authorized representative of the Secretary and such equipment be examined daily and a record be kept of such examination.

Underground coal mines usually present harsh and hostile working environments. The ventilation system is the most vital life support system in underground mining and a properly operating ventilation system is essential for maintaining a safe and healthful working environment. Lack of adequate ventilation in underground mines has resulted in fatalities from asphyxiation and explosions.

An underground mine is a maze of tunnels that must be adequately ventilated with fresh air to provide a safe environment for miners. Methane is liberated from the strata, and noxious gases and dusts from blasting and other mining activities may be present. The explosive and noxious gases and dusts must be diluted, rendered harmless, and carried to the surface by the ventilating currents. Sufficient air must be provided to maintain the level of respirable dust at or below 2 milligrams per cubic meter of air and air quality must be maintained in accordance with MSHA standards. Mechanical ventilation equipment of sufficient capacity must operate at all times while miners are in the mine. Ground conditions are subject to frequent changes, thus sufficient tests and examinations are necessary to ensure the integrity of the ventilation system and to detect any changes that may require adjustments in the system. Records of tests and examinations are necessary to ensure that the ventilation system is being maintained and that changes which could adversely affect the integrity of the system or the safety of the miners are

not occurring. These examination, reporting and recordkeeping requirements of §§ 75.310, 75.312, 75.342, 75.351, 75.360 through 75.364, 75.370, 75.371, and 75.382 also incorporate examinations of other critical aspects of the underground work environment such as roof conditions and electrical equipment which have historically caused numerous fatalities if not properly maintained and operated. For additional substantive information about this ICR, see the related notice published in the *Federal Register* on July 21, 2021 (86 FR 38502).

This information collection is subject to the PRA. A Federal agency generally cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information, and the public is generally not required to respond to an information collection, unless the OMB approves it and displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. In addition, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall generally be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information that does not display a valid OMB Control Number. *See* 5 CFR 1320.5(a) and 1320.6.

DOL seeks PRA authorization for this information collection for three (3) years. OMB authorization for an ICR cannot be for more than three (3) years without renewal. The DOL notes that information collection requirements submitted to the OMB for existing ICRs receive a month-to-month extension while they undergo review.

Agency: DOL-MSHA.

Title of Collection: Ventilation Plans, Tests, and Examinations in Underground Coal Mines.

OMB Control Number: 1219-0088.

Affected Public: Private Sector: Businesses or other for-profit institutions.

Total Estimated Number of Respondents: 153.

Total Estimated Number of Responses: 10,926.

Total Estimated Annual Time Burden: 115,874 hours.

Total Estimated Annual Other Costs Burden: \$128,046.

Authority: 44 U.S.C. 3507(a)(1)(D).

Dated: November 23, 2021.

Nora Hernandez,

Department Clearance Officer.

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